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Jesse Cook

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ABSTRACT: Adding to scholarship that addresses Eugene O'Neill's expressionist play, *The Hairy Ape* (1922), as an exposition of class inequality, labor exploitation, and masculine identity, I examine the critique inherent in Yank's articulation of white working-class masculinity. More than a mere victim of these systems, I argue that Yank also upholds and ennobles the drudgery of industrial capitalism as a means of reclaiming labor authority as a superior white worker. The play articulates how working-class pride in the hardships of work reinforces and valorizes systemic problems that perpetuate such dangerous and oppressive working conditions while simultaneously foreclosing opportunities for labor solidarity.

KEYWORDS: expressionism, Eugene O'Neill, *The Hairy Ape*, work, masculinity, theater

> *"According to the historiography of masculinity, white working-class manhood has been 'under siege' since the founding of the republic."*
>
> —Ava Baron

In 1911, five years before Eugene O'Neill would join the ranks of the Provincetown Players and eleven years before the first performance of *The Hairy Ape*, O'Neill's friend known only as Driscoll, attempted suicide by jumping overboard while working as a stoker on a passenger liner. Fished out of the water after a passenger saw him go overboard, Driscoll would make a second

Jesse Cook is a recent PhD graduate from the English department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His dissertation examines how twentieth century authors, disillusioned by the dehumanization of mass industry, reconsider work's role in defining American identity and recast the jingoistic narrative of American industry and exceptionalism as a tool to delegitimize efforts by workers to gain a greater sense of autonomy and self-actualization through labor activism.

attempt two voyages later while passing along Newfoundland. This second attempt would prove successful. Shaken by Driscoll's death, O'Neill brooded over what may have compelled his friend, a man O'Neill saw as the "acme of belongingness" and self-confidence, to commit suicide.[1] While O'Neill at the time had a feeling that Driscoll's death was the result of some rupture in his sense of belonging to the world, it was not until O'Neill began work on *The Hairy Ape* that he would solidify his understanding of the feelings that compelled Driscoll to take his own life. Although, according to O'Neill, Driscoll "was very proud of his strength" and "his capacity for grueling work," it was not enough to sustain his sense of selfhood. While Driscoll could maintain his "limited conception of the universe" within the stokehole, he was not able to accept his indistinguishable place amongst the ever-churning cogs of the industrial machine (Gelb, *O'Neill*, 66–165, 488).

O'Neill channeled this anxiety into *The Hairy Ape*'s protagonist, Robert "Yank" Smith, an industrious stoker endeavoring to exact revenge on the steel heiress, Mildred Douglas, who has "*insulted*" Yank and awakened his class consciousness. Dissatisfied with his life after his encounter with Mildred and unwilling to align himself with political movements sympathetic to class equality, Yank comes to realize that for all his boasting of being the one to make the "woild" move, the reality is that he "don't belong in it."[2] *The Hairy Ape* dramatizes Yank's fall from a false sense of self-actualization as he begins to understand that his so-called assertion of autonomy—his unwavering devotion to his work—was always an act of servitude to an untouchable wealthy elite, embodied in the steel heiress Mildred, the Fifth Avenue crowd who profit from his work, and the steel company that ultimately comes to define them. As Yank elucidates at the play's conclusion: "Steel was me, and I owned de woild. Now I ain't steel, and de woild owns me" (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 159). Yank's closing realization provides a vital means of understanding the relationship between a worker's conception of selfhood in relation to their work, especially under mechanized mass labor. Best captured in Yank's proclamation that "it takes a man to work in hell," the play articulates how working-class pride in the hardships of work has the potential to reinforce and valorize the larger systemic problems that perpetuate such dangerous and oppressive working conditions (128).

Adding to scholarship that focuses on *The Hairy Ape*'s exposition of class inequality, labor exploitation, and masculine identity, I examine the critique inherent in Yank's working-class masculinity.[3] In past readings, Yank is frequently positioned as a man *acted upon*, as scholars Maria Miliora and Patrick Chura posit. According to Miliora and Chura, Yank is a "fragile" man who suffers at the hands of Mildred, a representative of the wealthy elites, who intrudes upon and commodifies Yank and his labor in a "self-absorbed . . . slumming expedition" (Miliora, "A Self Psychological Study," 416; Chura, "'Vital Contact,'" 530). While these critiques of Mildred, Yank, and the unsympathetic capitalist system that profits from the suffering of the working-class communities, are concomitant with my reading of the play, I argue that Yank also upholds and ennobles the problematic capitalist attitude toward labor that works to keep him oppressed. These assessments of Yank as a character acted upon ignore a central tenet

of expressionist theater, the interplay between the interior and the exterior world. As Julia Walker explains, "expressionism represents both outside forces pressing in and internal forces pressing back out onto the environment."[4] This is achieved through performative flourishes—including an emphasis on repetitive movements, clipped dialogue, and flat characters—that stylize the effects of mechanization and labor optimization practices, and the use of the mise-en-scène as a means of symbolizing the abstract "spiritual, emotional, or psychological state of its central character" (Walker, "Naturalism," 271). These aesthetic flourishes modernize expressionism's social commentary by complicating the relationship between the individual and his or her society:

> Expressionism invites its audience to consider the larger social forces pressing in on the modern subject. But, by pressing the spiritual, emotional, or psychological state of that modern subject back onto the mise-en-scène, it complicates the analytical perspective of the scientist regarding a "slice of life" under a slide glass by inviting the audience to vicariously experience the character's proprioception of his or her world (Walker, "Naturalism," 276).

The complex push and pull between the internalization of outer forces and outward projection of inner desires opens opportunities to discuss the messy relationship between structural oppression and individual acquiescence to such systems. Thus, in *The Hairy Ape*, the problem of worker self-actualization proves the result of both the systemic violence that emerges in the form of mechanical innovations and the self-inflicted violence of the workers' unwavering faith in their work to achieve autonomy. As Stark Young asserts in his review of the original Provincetown Players production, the tragedy of Yank stems in large part from his "great inflexible hulk of . . . body, mind and soul," which only permits "half admitted" acknowledgement of his own faults, "covered up with oaths" of revenge that do nothing to mend the wounds inflicted on his psyche.[5] Without disregarding the play's recognition that workers possess limited means of opposing the abstract systems and monolithic corporations that oppress them, I examine O'Neill's characterization of Yank as a critique of the misguided and paradoxical idealization of a mechanically industrious and dehumanizing working-class masculinity that confuses rigid and inflexible subservience to an exploitive capitalist system as masculine empowerment and autonomy.

In the process, I will also examine the understudied racial and gendered themes of the play, which correlate Yank's enthusiasm for and anxieties toward his work with the increase in both women and non-white workers in traditionally homogenous workspaces. White men were especially sensitive to the changes occurring at the turn of the century for reasons unsurprising and eternal: The simplification of work and the increase in non-white and female workers in the labor pool dispelled the ethos of white (Anglo-American) male supremacy. This results in the construction of an invasion narrative that puts the blame on immigrants, African Americans, and women for the dwindling power of white male laborers. I contend that O'Neill's incorporation of these elements in *The Hairy Ape* counters such arguments by representing these anxieties as self-inflicted harm (outward projections of internal feelings) that only

serve to empower the systems of oppression. While the desire to justify losses in labor autonomy is to implicate foreign invaders, the reality is that these changes have been the result of white capitalist moves to accrue more wealth while disenfranchising the American worker.

Working-Class Masculinity and the Twentieth-Century Man

Much like the stokehole in which O'Neill sets the first half of *The Hairy Ape*, early twentieth-century labor discourse was complex, divergent, and volatile. The competing perspectives on work and the working-class man are imagined in the play by Long, Yank, and Paddy, disparate voices attempting to rationalize the shifting conceptions of work at the turn of the century. As much a period of left-wing, union-centric progressivism as it was of right-wing populism, it is challenging to codify a singular vision that best represents the attitude of working-class men toward their labor. However, it is fair to say that during these early decades of the twentieth century, workers harbored feelings of nostalgia for the nineteenth century as an idyllic one for working-class men and wrestled with an anxiety about the future of their role in American society. Paddy, the elder stoker of O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*, expresses the angst of the modern worker during his lament for "the fine days" of his youth when "we was free men" working in harmony with the sea on sailing ships that allowed men to express their "skill and daring" *and* enjoy their private leisure during off hours (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 126, 127). In Paddy's idealized past, the sailors were "fine strong men" with "clean skins," "clear eyes," and "straight backs and full chests" (126). This, as opposed to the stooped over stokers who slave away in the bowels of the modern steam ship. Long, the radical cipher of the play, uses Paddy's recollection as a call to arms while Yank refuses such wistfulness out of hand as a marker of Paddy's labor obsolescence.

The shift in the male laborer's relationship to his work and his sense of manhood is in no small part the result of a confluence of mechanical innovations and cultural shifts in the early twentieth century: Frederick Winslow Taylor's scientific management and its application in Henry Ford's assembly line system, along with the Great Migration of Southern Black laborers to the North and an influx of European migrants—prior to World War I—to the United States. As rapid developments in mechanization and a renewed interest in scientific management furthered the nineteenth century's systematic obsolescence of many jobs that awarded workers a sense of individuality and autonomy—such as agricultural and craftsman professions—a growing number of "non-white" workers from both Europe and the American South moved into industrial cities seeking economic opportunities. As such, white masculinity was felt to be in crisis.[6] I use *felt* here in line with Ava Baron's commentary on the omnipresence of white male anxiety, as throughout these transitional periods, white working-class men are never actually in a state of endangerment or crisis; rather, the phrase typically defines an anxiety concerning new cultural developments (e.g. the growing presence of women in the workplace, changing labor markets, and rising numbers of African

American and immigrant labor) within traditionally homogenous white male working-class communities that elicits a shift in their own perception of self. "According to the historiography of masculinity," Baron explains, "white working-class manhood has been 'under siege' since the founding of the republic."[7] Nevertheless, as mass production evolved, it atomized the complexities of production into menial and repetitive tasks, trivializing work that previously awarded men the laurels and pay of a craftsman or professional (Muncy, "Trustbusting," 231).

Frederick Taylor's near-fanatical drive to fine tune both machines and men to achieve maximum efficiency resulted in the systematizing of human labor through the sub-dividing of labor tasks, the scrutiny of labor efficiency, and the creation of the efficiency manager to measure and enforce productivity quotas. Ford's embrace of motion analysis and stopwatch management were heralded as boons to efficiency and worker happiness since they ensured higher levels of productivity without the stress of thinking about complicated labor processes.[8] The reality of applying scientific management and assembly line systems to human laborers proved otherwise. The division of labor meant that workers rarely achieved the sense of self-satisfaction associated with completing a job, and professional advancement disappeared as labor deskilling closed off avenues to promotion. This not only alienated workers from their work—abstracting production into a series of rote movements—but also ensured cheaper and more dependent workers. As Steven Maynard highlights, the power of professionalization "was by the twentieth century turned against" workers to delegitimize their work and their demands for respect and remuneration.[9] It became harder to make demands on one's employer when an employee was understood to be an interchangeable cog in the machine.

Additionally, as Siegfried Giedion explains, Taylorism, in its attempt to find the limits of human productivity, ignored the fact that "the human organism is more complex than the steam hammer."[10] In fact, Taylor was reticent to concede any complexity or intelligence to workers, often characterizing them as inferior to "an intelligent gorilla."[11] In an excoriating passage from Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management* (1915), he explains to his reader that most workers are "so stupid" that they are "unfitted to do most kinds of laboring work" (Taylor, *Principles*, 62). It seems, inversely, that the stupidity that Taylor levels at workers was *a result of*, rather than a justification for, scientific management. This is captured in a firsthand account from Elmer Rice, a contemporary playwright of O'Neill's, of a man working in "the canning section" of a factory organized by Taylor's logic: "a young man sat beside a vat through which sealed cans of beef stew moved on a belt. Open-eyed and open-mouthed, he watched for air bubbles, snatching out the imperfectly sealed cans, a horrible picture of imbecility. I felt strongly about the stultifying effects of industrialism; that moronic boy personified for me the evils of the machine age."[12]

These feelings of degeneration and anonymity were made more acute by the increased diversity of the workplace as more European immigrants and African American transplants moved into labor domains previously exclusive to white—as defined by their Anglo-American nationality—working-class men. With the rise in deskilled industrial

labor, employers began hiring greater numbers of immigrant and African American workers at cheaper wages. Between 1906 and 1911, over six million immigrant workers arrived in the country and by the beginning of 1910, immigrants made up half of industrial labor in the United States while only constituting 14 percent of the population.[13] Simultaneously, the Great Migration saw over one million African Americans migrate from agriculture work in the rural South to industrial labor in both Southern cities and the North, with an initial surge between 1916 and 1918 of more than 400,000 Black workers to fulfill wartime production and the potential need for replacement workers (Hapke, *Labor's Text*, 197). However, while African American and immigrant workers generally saw their lives improved by industrial employment, they were far from treated equally. In addition to racist antagonism from white workers, and subject to worse pay and work conditions, they were equal victims to the dehumanizing manipulations of corporations who saw them as effective tools in stamping out white worker unrest in response to unfair work conditions (Marks, *Farewell*, 168).

Such shifts in the cultural makeup of the workplace necessitated a new articulation of true masculinity, leading to a resurgence in Social Darwinism and eugenics as a means of racially codifying masculinity as white. This new measure of masculinity stressed the importance of virile, aggressive, and instinctual masculine power as a means of overcoming the unending battle between men in the capitalist market, which allowed white laborers to disguise their racial privilege as a superior physical prowess. These white supremacist ideologies—continuations of turn-of-the-century anti-Asian labor propaganda meant to privilege "American manhood against Asiatic Coolieism"—established pseudo-scientific parameters within which "white" working-class men could create exclusivity and retain a feeling of distinct superiority and identity.[14] Survival-of-the-fittest logic, made popular by William Graham Sumner and Lothrop Stoddard among numerous others, pervaded the discourse of labor and identity as working-class masculinity now became a question of determining who was the most *exceptional* at performing these largely rudimentary tasks, a question that was often answered through very tangible measurements of strength and efficiency.

No longer masters of their own narratives and unable to claim an independent enterprise or craft as a marker of their masculine autonomy, white working-class men shifted their masculine coda to align with the hardships and demands of their labor as a new means of defining their masculine identity. As a result, white working-class men reasserted their masculinity through physical acts of masculine prowess that employed "strength as a substitute for control of their work and power at the workplace" (Baron, "Masculinity," 147). Industrial workers demonstrated the power of their bodies through feats of daring in their labor that put their life and limb at risk and reclaimed a sense of self-determinism and ownership that reasserts the perceived loss in autonomy inherent in laboring for the profit of a corporate boss. For white-collar workers unable to exercise their muscular masculinity in their office labor, out-of-office actions served to supplement the emasculation felt in the workplace. As Baron notes, "Suffering from anxiety resulting from 'overcivilization' and threatened with 'neurasthenia,' an occupational health hazard believed to be related to sedentary jobs, "middle-class men

became obsessed with ways to compensate for their emasculation . . . that emphasized muscularity and toughness outside of the workplace" (Baron, "Masculinity," 147). One finds this trope across American modernist literature of the time, from Hemingway's Jake Barnes to Sinclair Lewis's George Babbitt. *Babbitt* (1922), published the same year as O'Neill's *Hairy Ape*, captures this insecurity astutely in Babbitt's ever-nagging desire to abscond to the woods where he could live like a man, and his propensity to reimagine his upper middle-class lifestyle as a brusque working-class ruggedness, equating his office to a "pirate ship" and idolizing "bigness in anything," including "mountains, jewels, muscles, wealth, [and] words."[15] As Mary Stergio-Kita et al. explains, "doing dangerous work is frequently equated to doing gender."[16] It is no surprise then that Yank, as an exhibition of his effectiveness and belongingness as a worker and a man, takes pride in the brutal exertions of his labor.

This relationship between working-class masculinity and workplace danger pervades much of O'Neill's early plays, suggesting that O'Neill was more than passingly interested in the effects of work on one's sense of selfhood. In a play like *Anna Christie*, performed the same year as *Hairy Ape*, O'Neill captures the tension between manhood and dangerous labor in Matt Burke, a more grounded rendering of Yank, a rough young stoker "*in the full power of his heavy-muscled, immense strength*."[17] After being rescued by the titular Anna and her father Chris Christopherson, Burke boisterously recounts his five-day stranding in an open boat at sea as "aisy for a rale man with guts to him . . . all in the day's work" (O'Neill, "Anna Christie," 62). The bravado and cool of the line points to the stoker's need to represent his masculinity as stoic suffering and survival, with the implicit understanding that life-threatening danger is an inherent and blasé feature of the job. Similarly, in O'Neill's 1914 play *Bound East for Cardiff*—his first produced and one of the Glencairn plays—O'Neill makes a more melodramatic connection between masculinity and labor. The play is also the first to explicitly connect Yank to O'Neill's real-life friend, Driscoll, who committed suicide while working as a stoker on a steamship. The play centers on the death of a character named Yank, who suffers a fatal injury after falling into a hold in the ship. The play concludes with Yank and a fictionalized Driscoll holding a final intimate conversation before Yank succumbs to his injuries. In his final reflections on life, the proto-Yank meditates on the unsatisfying arc of his life, lamenting that the "sailor life ain't much to cry about leavin'—just one ship after another, hard work, small pay, and bum grub . . . travellin' all over the world and never seein' none of it."[18] O'Neill would go on to address the destructive relationship between masculinity and work in several other early plays, including *The Great God Brown* (1926) and *Dynamo* (1929). *Dynamo* being an especially interesting play in the context of *The Hairy Ape*, considering its focus on the machine worship of the play's protagonist, Rueben Light, in response to an emasculating event in the first act. This thematic pattern points up O'Neill's fixation on what Julia Walker prescribes as "the problem of identifying so closely with one's work that one risked becoming blind to the actual conditions of one's life," which O'Neill saw at the root of Driscoll's death and the larger suffering of working-class communities (*Expressionism*, 138). I contend that it is in *The Hairy Ape* that O'Neill most effectively captures and expresses this paradoxical ideology that he believed lay at the heart of Driscoll's unhappiness.

Reading Yank as a critique of working-class masculinity, I do not mean to suggest that O'Neill's play proposes that the working-class population suffers from some inherent deficiency that results in their subjugation and inferiority. On the contrary, while *The Hairy Ape* is critical of Yank, it avoids using him to make generalized assumptions about the working-class and its ability to recognize and combat class inequality. Rather, O'Neill's play rejects the paternalism of Progressivist lecture theater that assumed the necessity of a middle-class intervention into working-class communities to resolve endemic problems.[19] O'Neill's departure from traditional middle-class theater is likely equal parts the result of O'Neill's personal rejection of what he saw as the artificiality and hypocrisy of his middle-class upbringing and the influence of the burgeoning experimental theater of the turn of the century, such as the Paterson Strike Pageant and the influx of European Expressionism, that both brought workers on to the stage and invited them into the theater.[20] In keeping with these radical shifts in the depiction of workers, O'Neill centers the worker as the subject of interest and reimagines the would-be philanthropist (Mildred) as a corruptive interlocuter more interested in the moral self-satisfaction she will gain from the cross-cultural encounter than the hurt she may inflict on those with which she makes contact. This dramatic departure from the norms of progressive theater, according to Chura, proves O'Neill's representation of class struggle an "effective intensification" of earlier fictional representations, something equally lauded in the original reviews for the play, as it forces audiences to confront the psychological effects of social inequality from the perspective of those affected by it (Chura, "Ernest Poole's," 33).[21]

Importantly, O'Neill foregrounds the play with stage directions that articulate how the stokers' environment directly affects their behavior and biology rather than any inherent deficiency. Trapped within the metal "*bowels*" of the ship like "*beasts in a cage*," the stokers are stunted by the ship's oppressive framework that "*crushes down upon the men's heads*," preventing them from standing upright (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 121). As longtime Provincetown player and intimate O'Neill collaborator James Light outlined for H. M. Harwood—the English theater manager who staged the 1931 London production of *The Hairy Ape*—the stoker's forecastle used in scene one "was roughly 10 x 15 and six feet high," forcing the actors to crowd together and stoop to avoid hitting their heads on the forecastle's ceiling. Light explains that the room was filled with "[f]ourteen characters," resulting in a cramped and volatile space, cacophonous with the boisterous cries of sailors and the disharmonious clatter of machinery.[22] As a result, the firemen are depicted onstage as evolutionarily changed compared to the wealthy passengers that luxuriate on the top deck. In so doing this, O'Neill rejects popular, and often white-supremacist, theories of social progress that inform the aforementioned Progressive-era labor theater. As John Nickel points out, the play "intervenes in the nature vs. nurture debates" used to justify racial and class inequality through its "portrayal of the stokers to show how significant an influence the social environment, vis-à-vis heredity, can be on a person's physical characteristics."[23]

The opening description of the stokers characterizes them as reshaped by their work environment to better survive below deck, a visualization that both reifies the stokers lowly social position and the pervasive and malignant effects of such work on the worker, regardless of racial or ethnic background.

Confined to the cramped steel belly of the ship, these men become stooped-over brutes, built for raw, brutal action, with *"long arms of tremendous power"* and overdeveloped back and shoulder muscles for shoveling coal.[24] These physical expressions of primitivity evoke the degenerative effects of industrialization on workers, who are molded by their work environment to be physically robust and intellectually deficient. Much like the caged ape that Yank will encounter at the play's conclusion, most of the stokers may be capable of *feeling* the physical confinement of the ship but they lack the capacity to articulate the spiritual disharmony that troubles them at their core. It is no surprise then that within their labor enclosure, they appraise Yank as the alpha and not Long, who has the political acumen to unify the stokers in a fight for better working conditions.[25] This represents the cruel irony of the play: the stokers view Yank as *"the very last word in what they are, their most highly developed individual,"* a troubling ascription considering Yank's pride in his servility and emphatic desire to sublimate himself to the capitalist machine (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 121).

Yank's dependence upon the confines of the ship to retain his masculine authority is expressed through his vicious assault on the other stokers who imagine the joys of life in the outside world. While the other stokers express their fantasies of escape from their labor, lamenting the six days of hell they must endure before reaching the freedom of Southampton and singing *"sentimental"* songs of homes and women that they have left behind, Yank reimagines the inhospitable workspace as his home and interprets any desires for escape into the outside world as expressions of cowardice and effeminacy. In this way, Yank enacts the general desire for brotherhood and fraternity amongst laborers of the early twentieth century who believed that gender exclusivity could insulate them from attacks on their masculinity. These desires, crystallized in male-centric fraternal organizations, rejected "the century's most deeply held convictions about gender, especially the belief in the spiritual role of women and men's dependence upon them."[26] It is no surprise then that Yank takes offense at the others stokers' desires for separation from the homosociality of the stokehole: "Where d'yuh get dat tripe," Yank snarls at a sentimental stoker, "Home? Home, hell! I'll make a home for yuh! . . . Dis is home, see?" (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 124). For Yank, desiring something beyond one's labor threatens the limited autonomy and authority afforded him in the stokehole and speaks to a potential rift in the male unity created within the cramped bowels of the ship.

As a result, anything or anyone that does not conform to Yank's efficiency as a worker is immediately called into question and emasculated as a means of undermining its value. According to Yank, any sailor who longs for home is a "lousey boob," and any worker that rails against "De Cap'tlist class" is "yellow" (124, 125). Even drinking beer designates one a "goil" in Yank's eyes (122). To survive the brutality of truly masculine work, Yank explains, one must "[c]are for nobody" and "nix on nobody else carin'" (129).

Yank will only accept unquestioned loyalty to work as a means of self-expression, and anything aimed at alleviating the hardships of arduous work is disingenuous. Therefore, Yank is quick to silence Long and Paddy when they attempt to undermine the fantasy that he has created within the stokehole. Long "ain't no good for no one" because of his "Salvation Army-Socialist bull" and Paddy is "dead" for "[h]ittin' de pipe of de past."[27] Yank strikes at the heart of their beliefs by undermining their value: Long's political values are cheap charity pleas, and Paddy's desire for a more communal relationship to nature and life leaves one dead and lifeless. For Yank, to worry about anything beyond the end of one's shovel is to acknowledge one's lack of control over life. By stripping himself of all other obligations and desires—family, love, pleasure, equality—Yank hopes to safeguard himself against pernicious thoughts and actions that may compromise the security that he finds within his work.

Yank even sublimates his sexual desires into his labor by feminizing the engine and sexualizing his work. As Yank alludes in scene one, "It's me makes it hot! It's me makes it roar! It's me makes it move!" (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 128). These proclamations espouse Futurist rhetoric that resonates with Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: "I'm de ting in noise dat makes yuh hear it; I'm smoke and express trains and streamers and factory whistles" (128–29). In this way, Yank idealizes his ability to enervate the ship's engines and embody its properties—to merge himself with the machine and birth a new kind of laborer.[28] Yank's sexualization of his labor functions to assert his virility in lieu of the physical consummation that he abstains from in service to the ship. Yank believes that his integration with the ship and its technology reclaims his masculine autonomy, as he mistakes his willingness to disavow his humanity in service to his labor as a marker of his independent working-class masculinity.

However, it becomes clear that these moves and Yank's rhetoric do little to reclaim any lost autonomy considering his body is regulated to satisfy the needs of the capitalist machine, as evidenced by the incessant whistle that dictates his movements. As O'Neill identifies in the stage directions for the end of scene one, when the whistle sounds for the next shift, "*the men jump up mechanically, file through the door silently close upon each other's heels in what is very like a prisoners' lockstep.*"[29] The stokers' Pavlovian response to the whistle undermines any proclamations of autonomy. Although Yank jeers at the engineers "crackin' de whip," he nevertheless relents to their orders, forgoing an opportunity to exercise autonomy through soldiering—a deliberate slowdown in productivity—and relinquishing control of his body to the automated rhythms of efficiency management."[30] The stokers may deliver the coal to the engines, but it is at the behest of the engineers. This is typified by Mildred's brief but integral appearance in the play.

The anemic heiress to the Nazareth steel company that owns the ship, Mildred embodies the apathetic downclasser with a "groping" desire "to be some use in the world" (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 131). However, Mildred's languid detachment from her social work belies an insidious "predation on the lower classes" that Chura attributes to "sublimated sexual desires" (Chura, "Vital Contact, 532). This is made apparent through Mildred's sexually charged interactions with the ship's engineers that

codifies their spaces as exotic wellsprings from which she can replenish the lost vitality "*sapped*" from her "*before she was conceived*" (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 130). In her interactions with the engineers escorting her to the stokehole, Mildred leers at unintended innuendo and relishes the stains of labor that she may receive while slumming in the gutter "from which [her family name] sprang" (134). Far from philanthropic, Mildred's desire to be "deflowered" by her proximity to the stokers both satisfies a repressed sexual energy and reproduces the capitalist profiteering of her forefathers by commodifying the workers as objects for her consumption. Like her grandfather and father, who melted steel and made millions, Mildred wants to puddle in the stokehole to enrich herself, or as she confesses to her aunt, to "gorge [herself] and be happy" (132). Read this way, Mildred's contact with the stokers both reinforces and subverts Yank's insistence that he "makes it move," casting Mildred as the engine to which Yank and the other stokers are fed.

This plays up, to comedic effect, the gendered anxieties of the men, as Mildred's objectifying power is channeled through the stage directions to scene three. The men, "*stripped to the waist*," move in "*rhythmic motion*" to the "*throbbing beat of the engines*," charging the stokehole with an erotic energy that reimagines their work as a sexualized performance for Mildred's female gaze (134–35). This hyper-sexualized presentation of the men's bodies and their labor undercuts Yank's self-serious assertions that he "makes it hot," deflating his earlier boasts as comical eroticism. The men's positioning and shoveling expresses an automatonlike uniformity that marks them as mechanical servants rather than liberated individuals. Lined in a row along the furnace doors that they feed, the stokers shovel coal, "*looking neither to right nor left*," repeating until the engineers blow the whistle to break. They work in a "*mechanical regulated recurrence*" that dehumanizes them and, according to Thierry Dubost, "provide[s] the audience with a through line which highlights the characters' alienation" (135). The stokers' eroticized appearance and mechanical movement designates them as organic tools for Mildred's satisfaction. This undermines Yank's authority, as it both deindividualizes him and visually realizes the fragility that he believed was negated in the workspace.

Mildred's presence in the stokehole actualizes the abstract power dynamic that controls Yank's life, forcing him to confront the impotence of his working-class masculinity in the face of the capitalist bourgeoise. Imbued with the power of her class position, Mildred arrests the masculine output, compelling the men to halt their labor, "*dumbfounded by the spectacle*" of Mildred in the stokehole. Yank is especially affected by Mildred's presence, turning "*to stone*" when he looks into her eyes (137). Although Yank is incapable of articulating the injury at "*the very heart of his pride*" inflicted by Mildred's gaze in the stokehole, the implications of her transgression are clear: Mildred's anemic femininity equally opposes Yank's virile masculinity, exposing the artificiality of his power within the capitalist structure that imprisons him. In their meeting, O'Neill again evokes whiteness to distinguish between Mildred's pristine wealthiness and Yank's besmirched poverty. She is "rich white" while he is "poor white," further elucidating concepts of white anxiety over becoming a wage slave. Ralph Ciancio observes that the similarities between Yank and Brutus Jones, the protagonist of O'Neill's *The*

Emperor Jones (1920), highlight capitalism's "perpetuation of slavery without regard to race," pointing up the importance of Yank's name as indicative of his place as "a native son whom materialistic forces have displaced" (Ciancio, "Richard Wright," 56). The American worker and the American dream that he represents have become a less conspicuous perpetuation of slavery's past. All of Yank's practical logic fails to explain Mildred's capacity to transcend the "*white steel*" boundaries of the ship that imprisons him, problematizing his belief that raw muscularity dictates one's social standing (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 121). Mildred possesses a social impunity that allows her to freely move across class boundaries and supersede laws and regulations, something Yank's work or muscularity will never afford him.

In the wake of this cross-cultural encounter, which constitutes all of scene four, Yank is set adrift, as any attempts to question the capitalist system that profits from his work would require him to reckon with the artifice of his masculine performance. Posed in scene four like Rodin's *The Thinker*, O'Neill presents Yank's awakening as a comical moment of contemplation. Unwilling, or unable, to conceptualize the complex and abstract social hierarchies that control his life, Yank ultimately interprets, as James A. Robinson explains, "his situation as that of the traditional tragic hero in conflict with an immutable force that transcends social concerns" to justify his working-class masculinity as a necessary characteristic for survival (Robinson, "Masculine Primitive," 105–6). As a result, what could be an opportunity for earnest self-reflection becomes an exercise in entrenching Yank's long held conviction that the labor battle is a têt-a-têt meant to vindicate Yank's masculinity at the cost of perpetuating the exploitation inflicted upon the working class.

Yank's need to prove his masculinity leads him to intensify his masculine performance by extended exposure to the harmful coal soot that coats the stokers as they work. In doing this, Yank reveals the dual ironies of his white male performativity: The soot literalizes the self-inflicted harm resultant from such masculine bravado and brings to the fore the racial anxieties that underscore such behavior. While the other stokers have washed off the soot, Yank refuses to clean his face or body, marking him "*in contrast*" to the others as a "*blackened*" and "*brooding figure*" (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 138). Annalisa Brugnoli, in her analysis of the play, defines Yank's choice to leave himself unwashed as a deliberate symbolic protest against Mildred's "'dead white'" intrusion into his workspace by reaffirming his contrasting and defiant "blackness."[31] Nickel calls this what it is: "Yank is, in effect, in blackface" (Nickel, "Racial Degeneration," 34). Yank's soot-stained face, like O'Neill's conception of the stokehole, resists racist arguments of the period, like those perpetuated by Stoddard, that simultaneously evince white superiority while imagining a white working-class erasure through an ironic use of blackface to visually express the regressive effects of Yank's hyper masculinity. It is not the Black or immigrant worker, the play contests, that is killing the white worker, but the white worker himself. As Nickel explains, "by having a white man 'become' black and quickly regress, O'Neill seeks to convince his audience that degeneration is not biological—or racial—but cultural" (Nickel, "Racial Degeneration," 35). What is more, the soot provides a provocative visualization of Yank's complicity in both his

physical deterioration and psychological regression. Believing that this act of physical toughness will counter Mildred's psychic disruption, Yank *chooses* to poison himself and be synonymous with toxicity. As an act of defiance, this is entirely ineffective.

From here, Yank suffers ever greater falls because of his unwillingness to contemplate the limits of his working-class masculinity. In each subsequent scene following his encounter with Mildred, Yank experiences opportunities for self-realization and rehabilitation that could allow him to break free from the oppression of his masculine position and possibly enact change to better his community. However, Yank's refusal to acknowledge his own problematic worldview prevents him from ever moving beyond violent vendettas.

The final four scenes of the play function on a cycle of confrontation and defeat that push Yank to greater desires for violence. This "reveals [Yank] to be," as Walker points out, "a particular kind of lumpenproletarian, . . . who not only is ineducable on the subject of class conflict but persists in maintaining a specifically masculinist view that *might makes right*" (Walker, *Expressionism*, 140, emphasis added). We see this in scene five when Yank attempts to retaliate against Mildred and the "white-collar stiffs" of "Fif' Avenoo" by enacting his own transgression into their class space (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 144). Swaggering onto the scene, Yank attempts to insult, assault, and destroy the Fifth Avenue churchgoers and their luxury boulevard, but is rendered impotent. He cannot hit the crowd and is unable to tear out the concrete sidewalk. Like Mildred's spectral imperviousness aboard the ship, the Fifth Avenue crowd appears phantasmagoric, gliding like "genteel breezes" across a plane of existence beyond Yank's firmly material, muscular corporeality.[32] And although this scene and Yank's subsequent arrest enlighten him to the reality that "steel—where I tought I belonged" is in fact made for "[c]ages, cells, locks, bolts, bars" to imprison him, his unwillingness to relinquish his primal masculinity and its accompanying expressions of muscularity dooms him in the end (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 154).

Considering Yank's inability to grow, at least in any significant way, over the course of the play, it is little surprise that his journey ends at a gorilla exhibit at the Central Park Zoo. Drawn there by a dim sense of kinship between himself and the caged animal—Yank confides that he and the gorilla are of "de same club"—Ciancio reads the close of the play as Yank's acceptance of the "subhuman identity society would impose on him" (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 161; Ciancio, "Richard Wright," 49). Yank's commiseration with the caged ape solidifies Yank as a provocative and tragicomical figure of both virile masculinity and racist panic. As such, it is important to recognize the irony of the closing scene as a commentary on white anxieties toward work. As the model representative of the white worker, "*the very last word in what they are*," Yank's dismissal from society envisages the tragic future for Anglo-Americans imagined by racists ideologues like Stoddard and signals his disinheritance from the lineage of white social dominance. Stoddard was deeply concerned with the future of the "white world," and often warned of encroaching "colored armies . . . which would swamp whole populations and turn countries now white into *colored man's lands*."[33] While the gorilla in the scene could be understood, in racist terms, as the embodiment of the

non-white races, O'Neill refuses such assertions of racial essentialism by presenting the gorilla as a reflection of, not a foil for, Yank.

Unable to separate himself from the identity that he has cultivated in response to his work, Yank frees the ape from his cage to enact a final violent revenge against Mildred and the steel company. Trapped inextricably in his corporeality, as Walker posits, Yank still believes that he may gain a semblance of autonomy by maximizing the physical sacrifice of masculine labor to strike back at the bourgeoisie (Walker, *Expressionism*, 149). What Yank does not consider is that the ape, as his equal, cannot be his ally. As creatures under capitalist control, they are both in a fight to gain dominance over the other. Just as Yank fought to ensure his dominance amongst the stokers, the ape attacks and kills Yank to ensure its dominance, leaving Yank to die in the cage. Even in death, Yank cannot resist an insult to the gorilla's masculinity: bones crushed by the ape's powerful arms, Yank retorts, "Hey, I didn't say kiss me!" (O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 163). It is this immutability—played for laughs—that is perhaps the most comically dark takeaway from O'Neill's play: the impossibility of evoking change within this type of working-class man.

The play closes on a grim image of where this kind of working-class masculinity will get those so deeply entrenched in it. Yank's final resting place, much like his place of living and laboring, is a cage of his own making, a prison of his own narrow-mindedness that keeps him from enacting productive change to improve his and his fellow workers' conditions. Although the cages were made from corporate steel—the Mildreds and the masked Fifth Avenue movers and shakers that loom large over Yank—it is Yank who embraces them as home, and adamantly refuses to change in the face of an oppressive labor system that aims to eke out every last bit of his life before disposing of him. This unflinching examination and condemnation of working-class masculinity makes O'Neill's play a significant and prescient work, especially in the United States, as we see a rise in populist government embodied in Trumpism and a misguided faith in benevolent capitalism. A large swath of Trump supporters who come from working-class communities see salvation in the capitalist machine that has disenfranchised them.[34] While these modern laborers suffer under post-industrial conditions that have largely eliminated the kind of work that Yank cherished—making them choice targets for companies like Amazon to exploit local demand for employment—like Yank, these working-class Americans find themselves in eerily comparable positions as they work in the tedious, menial, and highly regulated warehouses of distribution centers across the country. And like Yank, they hold so tightly to their labor as a marker of their selfhood that they cannot see the harm they are inflicting on themselves by supporting a system that seeks to dismantle rights implemented to empower them.[35]

It is no surprise then that the play struck a chord during its revival at the Park Avenue Armory in 2017, three months after Trump's election. Bobby Cannavale, the actor who played Yank in the revival elucidates, "It's a hundred-year-old play, but it feels like this guy could be here right now." Speaking of the "Rust Belt" workers that he related to while preparing for the role, Cannavale notes the painful realization that must have occurred during the decline of these regional industries: "they were giants of industry,

and [now] they have to form all that at Wal-Mart?"[36] Through Yank, O'Neill captures the self-perpetuating trauma of a kind of working-class masculinity at the turn of the century that hindered progress towards a more equitable and rewarding working-class identity. Although the capitalist system that oppresses Yank and the labor class that he represents is, undoubtably, the villain of the play and, I would argue, modern labor woes, O'Neill's abstraction of the system, allowing it to dematerialize from Mildred into a nebulous and largely apathetic construct of control, forces the viewer to consider the worker's role in this system of oppression. It is this aspect that is so significant and often ignored. How do you fix an exploitative system in which the oppressed are manipulated into complicity in their own oppression? O'Neill stops short of providing an answer to this question, but *The Hairy Ape* asks us to begin an important discussion on how to address it.

Notes

1. Arthur and Barbara Gelb, *O'Neill* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 171, 165–66.

2. Eugene O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," in *O'Neill: Complete Plays: 1920–1931*, ed. Travis Bogard (New York: Library of America, 1988), 128.

3. See Patrick J. Chura, "'Vital Contact': Eugene O'Neill and the Working Class," *Twentieth Century Literature* 49, no. 4 (2003): 520–46; Maria T. Miliora, "A Self Psychological Study of Dehumanization in Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*," *Clinical Social Work Journal* 24, no. 4 (1996): 415–27; Dassia N. Posner, "America and the Individual: *The Hairy Ape* and *Machinal* at the Moscow Kamerny Theatre," *New Theatre Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2018): 3–15; James A. Robinson, "The Masculine Primitive and The Hairy Ape," *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 19, no. 1/2 (1995): 95–109; Julia Walker, *Expressionism and modernism in the American Theatre: Bodies, Voices, Words* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

4. Julia A. Walker, "Naturalism and Expressionism in American Drama," *The Oxford Handbook of American Drama*, ed. Jeffrey H Richards and Heather S. Nathans, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014): 264–79, 271.

5. Stark Young, "The Hairy Ape," *The New Republic*, March 22, 1922, 112–13, 113.

6. For an extensive analysis of white working-class men's fears of corporate capitalism, see Robyn Muncy, "Trustbusting and White Manhood in America, 1898–1914," *American Studies (Lawrence)* 38, no. 3 (1997): 21–42.

7. Ava Baron, "Masculinity, the Embodied male Worker, and the Historian's Gaze," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 69, no. 1 (2006): 146. For additional information on the perceived crisis in masculinity during the twentieth century, see *Boys Don't Cry?: Rethinking Narratives of Masculinity and Emotion in the U.S*, ed. Milette Shamir and Jennifer Travis (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); and Allan Johnson, *Masculine Identity in Modernist Literature: Castration, Narration, and a Sense of the Beginning, 1919–1945* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

8. Henry Ford explains, in his book of business philosophy by way of autobiography, *My Life and Work*, that while some men, himself included, desire work that necessitates both "mind as well as muscle," the average worker "wants a job in which he does not have to think." Ford goes so far as to assert that "in fact, to some types of mind thought is absolutely appalling" (Henry Ford, *My Life and Work* [New York: Doubleday, Page, 1923], 103).

9. Steven Maynard, "Rough Work and Rugged Men: The Social Construction of Masculinity in Working-Class History," *Labour/Le Travail* 23, no. 23 (1989):159–69, 162.

10. Siegfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 98.

11. Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Harper, 1915), 40.

12. Elmer Rice, *Minority Report: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), 127.

13. Laura Hapke, *Labor's Text: The Worker in American Fiction* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 117.

14. Colleen Lye, *America's Asia: Racial Form and American Literature, 1893–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 55–57; Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 77.

15. Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt* (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2005), 23, 29.

16. Mary Stergiou-Kita et al., "Danger Zone: Men, Masculinity and Occupational Health and Safety in High Risk Occupations," *Safety Science* 80 (2015): 213–20, 216.

17. Eugene O'Neill, "Anna Christie," in *Three Great Plays: The Emperor Jones, Anna Christie, The Hairy Ape*, ed. Tom Crawford (New York: Dover, 2005), 61.

18. Eugene O'Neill, "Bound East for Cardiff," in *Early Plays*, ed. Jeffrey H. Richards (New York: Penguin, 2001), 28.

19. Amy Brady, "The Workers' Theatre of the Twentieth Century," in *A History of American Working-Class Literature*, ed. Nicholas Coles and Paul Lauter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 326–40, 328.

20. See Walker, *Expressionism*, 123; Robinson, "Masculine Primitive," 95; and Chura, "'Vital Contact'" for in-depth discussion of O'Neill's middle-class upbringing. For discussions of the role of the Paterson Strike Pageant, see Brady, "The Workers' Theatre," 328; and Patrick Chura, "Ernest Poole's *The Harbor* as a Source for O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*," *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 33, no. 1 (2012): 30–31. According to Chura, the Paterson Pageant is widely considered to be the spark of American Drama, specifically as a catalyst for the Provincetown Players. For more on the effects of European Expressionism in American drama—especially related to O'Neill—see Mardi Valgemae, *Accelerated Grimace: Expressionism in the American Drama of the 1920s* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972).

21. Alexander Woollcott, in his review of the play, relishes O'Neill's choice to force the audience to observe the stokers at length: "Squirm as you may, [O'Neill] holds you while you listen to the rumble of their discontent" (Alexander Woollcott, "The Play," *New York Times*, March 10, 1922, 22, 22). Other reviews of the period, such as Gilbert Selders' "The New York Theaters" (1922), strike similar tones of admiration for O'Neill's audacity to look at the world from within the stokehole.

22. David Clare, "James Light: Notes on Staging Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* / Cover Letter to H. M. Harwood (1926)," *Eugene O'Neill Review* 41, no. 1 (2020): 23.

23. John Nickel, "Racial Degeneration and *The Hairy Ape*," *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 22, no. 1/2 (1998): 35. For further discussion of O'Neill and race, see Ralph A. Ciancio, "Richard Wright, Eugene O'Neill, and the Beast in The Skull," *Modern Language Studies* 23, no. 3 (1993): 45–59; Kurt Eisen, *The Theatre of Eugene O'Neill: American Modernism on the World Stage* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017); Peter J. Gillett, "O'Neill and the Racial Myths," *Twentieth Century Literature* 18, no. 2 (1972): 111–20.

24. This was visually codified for the audience in the menacing visage of Louis Wolheim, the actor who played Yank in the 1922 production. The college-educated actor, who formally taught at Cornell Preparatory School before achieving celebrity, exuded the physical brusqueness of "a rough-housing college football player with a broken nose," a classification that fit nicely into the primitive masculine coda championed by working-class men (Heather Addison, "'Actor Denied Straight Nose': Louis Wolheim and the Gendered Practice of Plastic Surgery in Silent-Era Hollywood," *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 58, no. 4 [2019], 4–5). In later productions of the play, similar effects were achieved through make-up that gave the actors playing the stokers "ape-like" features. By "shading below cheekbones, around eyes, and on foreheads," the famous 1926 Russian Kamerny production of *The Hairy Ape*, created "fur patterns" to accentuate the animalist appearance of the actors (Posner, "America and the Individual," 6).

25. This is a central problem within working-class communities unwilling to relinquish their labor as a symbol of their selfhood. Yank's antipathy toward Long's politics feeds into working-class masculine beliefs that protest is, according to David Pugh, a sign of an "effeminate and weak-willed" man who "wished to hamper men from doing what men knew they must do" (David G. Pugh, *Sons of Liberty: The Masculine Mind in Nineteenth-century America* [Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983], 102). For more on the tension between masculinity and protest, see Gregory Wood's "'The Paralysis of the Labor Movement': Men, Masculinity, and Unions in 1920s Detroit," *The Michigan Historical Review* 30, no. 1 (2004): 59–91.

26. Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 17.

27. O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 125, 128; For an extended discussion of Long's role in the play and O'Neill's complicated relationship to the I. W. W. and Socialism in America at large, see Doris Alexander, "Eugene O'Neill as Social Critic," *American Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1954): 349–63; for Paddy's role in the play, see Thierry Dubost, "The Last of Ireland: Becoming American Irish in O'Neill's Plays," *Etudes Irlandaises* 23, no. 2 (1998): 9–26.

28. O'Neill's evocation of Italian Futurism and Marinetti has not been missed by other scholars writing on *The Hairy Ape*. For in-depth analysis of the intersection of Italian Futurism and *The Hairy Ape*, see Daniel Murphy, "An American Futurism?: Corporeal History in O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* and Santell's Film Adaptation," *Eugene O'Neill Review* 39, no. 1 (2018): 114–33; and R. J. Cardullo, "O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* in Relation to Greek Tragedy, Italian Futurism, and Divine Comedy," in *Play Analysis: A Casebook on Modern Western Drama* (Boston, MA: Sense Publishers, 2015), 67–78; for a general exploration of Futurism and Modernism, see Alberto Toscano, "The Promethean Gap: Modernism, Machines, and the Obsolescence of Man," *Modernism/modernity* 23, no. 3 (2016): 593–609.

29. O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 129; In a letter to H. M. Harwood, James Light elaborates on the complex choreography of this scene for the actors playing the stokers: "Before 8 bells sound at the end of Yank's speech . . . the crew begins to break out in the same manner as before but at the first two beats of the bell stop rigid; the bell completes its eight in silence. At what would have been the 9-10 of the bell if it had gone on they rise. At the 10-11-12 turn to the door; at the 13-14 begin their lock-step march. The scene is the hardest for the work of the chorus; the chorus has to be synchronized with Yank's speeches so as to let his words through and yet keep the thing moving with terrific rapidity also the propeller noises must be plotted so that nothing is drowned and yet the full effect is gained" (Clare, "James Light," 24).

30. O'Neill, "The Hairy Ape," 135; As Stephen Meyer explains, "soldiering and output restriction—the two serious industrial sins—were a means to protest and to assert some control over unpleasant work situations" (*Manhood on the Line: Working-Class Masculinities in the American Heartland* [Champaign, IL, University of Illinois Press, 2016], 35).

31. Annalisa Brugnoli, "Eulogy of the Ape: Paradigms of Alterity and Identity in Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*," *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 33, no. 1 (2012): 43–55, 45.

32. This is further reinforced by the Fifth Avenue crowd's masked visages, which mark them as emotionless and detached from Yank. According to Brugnoli, the distance created between Yank and the wealthy elites of Fifth Avenue through the use of masks "effectively shows the two groups' inability not only to understand but to see one another" ("Eulogy," 46). As Chura identifies in his analysis of vital contact in the play, "[t]hough there is cross-class juxtaposition" in this scene like there was between Mildred and Yank in scene two, "there is no interaction between Yank and the rich because the barrier transgression is not downward but upward. The change in setting—out of the stokehole and onto Fifth Avenue—enables the upper-class . . . to remain oblivious to Yank's presence" ("Vital Contact," 534).

33. Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color: Against White World-Supremacy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), vi, emphasis added.

34. A central issue of Trump's campaign was to ennoble the "forgotten men and women" of American who feel that they have been left behind by liberal elites. The term "forgotten man," coined in the nineteenth century by William Graham Sumner, has long been used to ingratiate politicians, mostly presidents, to white working-class Americans who feel that a chameleonic "other" is the root of their

economic and cultural woes. See *NPR*, "President Trump's Inaugural Address, Annotated," *NPR*, January 20, 2017, www.npr.org/2017/01/20/510629447/watch-live-president-trumps-inauguration-ceremony; William Graham Sumner, *The Forgotten Man and Other Essays*, ed. Albert Galloway Keller (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1919).

35. As one example, in April 2021, Amazon workers voted against unionization at an Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama. For an extensive look at how Amazon has reshaped American labor, see Alec MacGillis' investigative work, *Fulfilment: Winning and Losing in One-Click America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021).

36. Bobby Cannavale, "Bobby Cannavale on the Rust Belt Relevance of 'The Hairy Ape' in the Trump Era (Q&A)," interview by Ashley Lee, *The Hollywood Reporter*, March 30, 2017, hollywoodreporter.com/news/general-news/bobby-cannavale-rust-belt-relevance-hairy-ape-trump-era-q-a-990150/.